WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS

SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

COMPILED BY KEVIN SAVETZ AND ABIGAIL CRANE

PC SHOPPING SITES

The sites in this listing sell products from multiple manufacturers. See the sites under "PC Direct Vendors," or check the *Computer Shopper* Source Directory ***(cgi.zdnet.com/slink?8145)*** for more information on PC manufacturers offering only their own brands (such as Dell and Gateway).

aberdeeninc.com

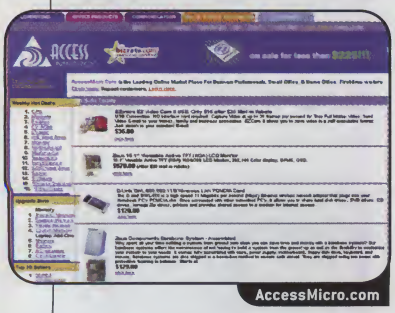
volume pricing • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Serving the savvy consumer who craves technical information, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories.

accessmicro.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Shoppers will enjoy the selection at **AccessMicro.com,** which offers 45,000 items ranging from memory to T1 routers. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors.



www.applied-computer.com

smooth navigation
handling fee on orders under $200

Selling PCs and supplies since 1984, **Applied Computer** promises to match or beat any advertised price. The company stocks 800,000 products—check the site's list of the 1,000 most popular ones.

blackbox.com

smooth navigation

Specializing in cabling and network-connectivity products, **Black Box's** extensive 900-page catalog of storage, LAN, switch, surge-protection, and other accessories can be viewed online or off.

buy.com

price-matching policy • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

You'll find everything from computers and software to electronics, books, movies, music, and video games at this monstrous, multifaceted site. **Buy.com** sells a whopping 850,000 items. Despite the site's mind-blowing selection, shopping is fast and efficient.

cdw.com

list of rebates and coupons • business leasing options available • smooth navigation • easy ordering

CDW offers an impressive array of hardware and software. The comparison tool lets shoppers create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories.

compgeeks.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Shop at **The Computer Geeks Discount Outlet** for discontinued and refurbished computer gear—it's a trove for anyone piecing together a PC. The varied selection features complete specs on every product and low prices.

compuplus.com

good return policy

Comp-U-Plus highlights its customer service, offering a 30-day money-back guarantee and free technical support. Its catalog isn't the biggest, but plenty of name brands are represented, and prices are reasonable.

compusa.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

CompUSA is a well-organized site offering a fair amount of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories, with electronics, software, and gadgets rounding out the selection. Don't overlook the site's clearance section.

computercomputer.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

This site is blunt about its target market: "Who should not shop here? Computer novices and first-time computer buyers or builders." But if you want to piece together your own PC and don't need technical assistance, **Computercomputer.com's** bare-bones systems and components will make a good starting point.

www.computergate.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

In business since 1991, **ComputerGate** offers a 30-day satisfaction return policy on its products, which include built-to-order PCs and peripherals.

computers4sure.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

COMPUTER SHOPPER

site OF THE month — FEBRUARY

gomez.com

Go to **Gómez.com** for the buzz on your favorite e-commerce sites. It offers ratings and consumer reviews of e-sellers and e-services in many varied markets: computers, apparel, music, online brokers, banks, travel agents, insurance carriers, and drugstores. To be exact, the company offers "scorecards" on 6,000 companies in 75 industries.

Considering spending some money at a particular merchant? Check with Gómez first to find out about the site's ease of use, customer confidence level, and quality of "relationship services," such as personalization and perks. Use the "Which is the best site" feature to find the best choice for different shopping profiles, including bargain-hunter, first-time buyer, and serious shopper.

You'll benefit from more than mere numbers on a scorecard. Quarterly reviews explain trends and detail key benefits and drawbacks for each site. Profiles offer company contact information, background about the firm, and CEO biographies. These facts paint a clear picture of the companies, so you can make an informed decision about doing business with them.

With its broad scope of site reviews and fair recommendations, Gómez.com belongs on every online shopper's bookmark list.

GÓMEZ.COM

Main focus: Gauging customer experience at 6,000 e-commerce companies in 75 industries

RECENT BEST SITE WINNERS

JANUARY

Crucial Technology ..... *www.crucial.com*

DECEMBER

eFax.com ..... *www.efax.com*
KBkids.com ..... *www.kbkids.com*
Yahoo Auctions ..... *auctions.yahoo.com*

SITE REVIEWS

The 17 well-stocked departments at **Computers4Sure.com** include networking equipment, peripherals, PDAs, scanners, and more—the selection spans 60,000 products. Bargain hunters can quickly sniff out deals on the Special Offers and Clearance pages.

computershopper.com

smooth navigation

Computer Shopper's own computer-buying site, **computershopper.com,** provides access to product reviews, interactive guides to choosing a desktop or a notebook, and How to Buy sections for the most popular product categories.

www.computersurplusoutlet.com

consignment service
• smooth navigation • easy ordering

Frugal shoppers and do-it-yourselfers will feel at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet.** The company sells closeouts, overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items at low prices. You can find complete, assembly-required Pentium systems for less than $100.

crucial.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

One of the world's largest providers of memory upgrades, **Crucial Technology** offers nearly 50,000 upgrade options for 10,000 computer systems. The site's Memory Selector helps buyers find the right product, and the company backs its memory with a lifetime warranty.

cyberrebate.com

"100% Off" tab shows 900 products whose rebates equal their cost
• smooth navigation • easy ordering
• good return policy
rebates take 10 to 14 weeks to process

CyberRebate.com only sells products that come with money-back rebates. You'll find a small selection of computer accessories and software. In addition, the site offers electronics, office supplies, and toys.

cyberwarehouse.com

smooth navigation • good return policy
may take up to three days to ship

If you're the kind of shopper who can't pass up a bargain-basement sale or an outlet mall, this site may be for you. **CyberWarehouse** offers PCs, monitors, printers, and other peripherals.

dalco.com

smooth navigation

Dalco stocks everything from motherboards to monitors. Bargain hunters will want to start with the specials, which are shown on the home page and change regularly.

dartek.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

With a roster of more than 100,000 products, **Dartek** peddles an impressive selection of hardware, software, networking equipment, and furniture. Thoughtful features include printable spec sheets, customers' product ratings, and a product-watch feature. Shoppers can earn hardware or frequent-flyer miles by joining the frequent-buyers club.

direct411.com

easy ordering • smooth navigation

Direct411 offers an impressive selection of 50,000 in-stock hardware and software products. The catalog includes servers, memory upgrades, storage devices, digital cameras, and software.

dirtcheapdrives.com

detailed archive of technical-support information • quantity discounts available • smooth navigation • easy ordering

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers deals on hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD hardware, drive arrays, and hard-to-find laptop storage. This 10-year-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and other accessories.

ecost.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full realm of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, software, and games. Featured specials in each category point shoppers to the best deals, and fastidiously organized subcategories help them find the exact products they need.

egghead.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Egghead.com shoppers can browse the hardware, software, office-product, and electronics superstores. You can also buy home electronics and leisure products.

www.electrified.com

30-day guarantee on all items
• se habla español • good return policy

Looking for deep discounts on older laptops, notebooks, monitors, and printers? **Electrified Discounters** specializes in products that are discontinued, second-inventory, refurbished, off-lease, or otherwise not state-of-the-art. Systems range from new Pentium II laptops to under-$200 used 486s.

elinux.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **eLinux.com** site offers hardware and software for users of the Linux operating system. Desktop and notebook systems for sale here have been tested with Linux and don't come bundled with that "other" OS.

www.firstsource.com

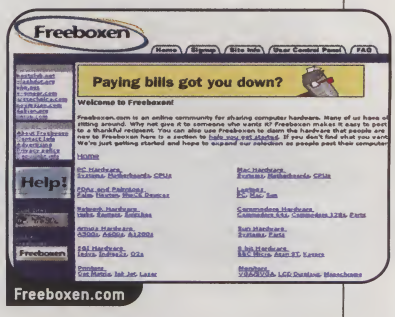
real-time online customer service
• smooth navigation • easy ordering

Focused on the technology needs of businesses, **firstsource.com** offers a broad range of choices in computer hardware, rack-mount systems, network tools, phone systems, wiring, and software.

freeboxen.com

smooth navigation

Freeboxen.com is a one-of-a-kind online community for sharing computer hardware. Browse the listings in search of hardware that others are giving away or offering for trade. If you have old hardware to spare, place a free ad to find it a good home.



globalcomputer.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Global Computer Supplies features same-day shipping on a gargantuan selection of PC components, accessories, software, furniture, and media. Well-stocked and exceptionally easy to navigate, the site offers one-stop shopping for PC and office needs.

gogocity.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

You'll get beyond **GoGoCity.com's** funny name when you see its excellent selection of computer hardware. You'll find desktop and notebook computers, peripherals, software, and PC accessories of all types. Detailed product information, often with pictures, rounds out the catalog.

insight.com

separate sites for the U.S., Canada, U.K., and Germany
• smooth navigation • easy ordering

With more than 100,000 items, **Insight** offers an impressive and easy-to-navigate catalog of hardware and software products. More than 100 free newsletters feature new-product news, closeout specials, and tech news.

www.jandr.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Computer World,** making this a one-stop shop for many. You'll also find a huge selection of digital and traditional film cameras.

J&R Computer World

laptoptravel.com

smooth navigation

Laptop Travel sells portable-computing and international travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters and couplers, and security accessories. You'll find both traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

thelinuxstore.com

smooth navigation

If your PC is penguin-powered, **TheLinuxStore.com** might be your place to shop. The site offers a small selection of hardware and software that's compatible with the popular alternative operating system. The community area offers Linux news, free downloads, and Web links.

mcglen.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

McGlen Micro's specialized searches can help you find memory and other accessories compatible with your computer, printer, and copier. Shoppers can design a custom system to be built and shipped in two days.

www.mediasourceinc.com

SITE REVIEWS

Media Source single-mindedly specializes in computer media. You'll find CD-Rs, bulk floppies, optical discs, Zip disks, Jaz disks, DATs, and more. You'll also find an impressive selection of writable CDs, including brand-name and generic disks, business-card CD-Rs, and printable media.

megahaus.com

lifetime technical support on all products • CD-mastering and other utility software • smooth navigation

MegaHaus calls itself "the drive authority." It offers a wide variety of storage solutions, including hard drives, DVD drives, RAID, and removable storage. A technical-information area features FAQs and specifications on hardware ranging from DVD players to drive brackets.

mei-microcenter.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

MEI-Micro Center offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec. There's also a small selection of peripherals. Rummage around the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

memman.com

all memory carries a lifetime warranty • good return policy

When it's time to upgrade the memory in your desktop or laptop, don't forget **Memory Man.** Besides memory chips, the site sells processors, motherboards, hard drives, heat sinks, and batteries for many types of notebooks.

memory4less.com

company tests all products shipped • smooth navigation

Memory4Less offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM, including older, hard-to-find types. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, it will tell you. The site also sells CPUs, motherboards, and laptop hard drives.

microx-press.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

MicroX-Press offers detailed information about most products, as well as a handy "E-mail me when this product is priced at…" feature and a configuration tool. Customers are invited to rate and review products they've tried.

www.mobile-mania.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Digital cameras, e-mail devices, PDAs, cases, and adapters of all sorts are available for folks on the go at **Mobile Mania.**

mobileplanet.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Offering gadgets for mobile professionals, **MobilePlanet** is home to a gaggle of high-tech tools and toys. The selection includes handheld and notebook computers, PDAs, wireless communication products, and travel-size printers and scanners—plus countless accessories for each.

mobshop.com

smooth navigation

MobShop offers group-buying discounts on computer hardware, software, PDAs, and home electronics. As more customers buy a product within a specified time period, the price drops for all buyers.

motherboards.com

smooth navigation

With a wide selection of motherboards from nine manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers can pick the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** This Web store offers CPUs, memory, graphics cards, drives, and other internal essentials.

Motherboards.com

www.mwave.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Multiwave Direct's friendly site sells a multitude of hardware and software products. In addition to PC systems and peripherals, this Web store stocks notebook accessories, videoconferencing equipment, and network tools.

neutronet.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Neutron carries thousands of computer systems and peripherals from nearly 400 different manufacturers and distributors. The site's handy toolbox offers easy access to best buys, help for first-time buyers, and a massive manufacturer directory.

www.notebooksuperstore.com

devoted exclusively to portable computers • easy ordering • smooth navigation

Notebook Superstore sells 50 different laptop models from nine manufacturers. You'll see technical details about

each model, and a comparison tool helps you zero in on the best portable for your needs.

123cdc.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Computer Discount Center offers a wide variety of PC add-ons, including storage, digital cameras, and displays. Shoppers will find competitive prices and detailed product information.

onvia.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Onvia.com, a business-to-business marketplace, offers many features that distinguish it as a small-business resource and computer-products store. The site's selection of computer hardware, software, and office products spans 37,000 items. The site also includes a Request for Quote marketplace, buying guides, and auctions.

outpost.com

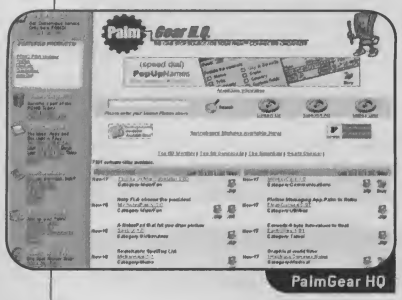
smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

The breadth of products at **Outpost.com** will impress. The site sells a wide selection of computer hardware and software, personal electronics, and office products. The company works hard to earn customer satisfaction with policies like a 30-day money-back guarantee and free overnight delivery.

palmgear.com

mailing lists offer news, specials, and user tips • smooth navigation

Palm-device users will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial downloadable programs at **PalmGear HQ.** The site features lists of the newest Palm programs, as well as essential software picks. Shoppers can buy handheld hardware and accessories, including carrying cases and styli.



pcconnection.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

In business for more than 15 years, **PC Connection** offers good deals on a colossal variety of products. Smart Selectors ease the searching process for shoppers looking for systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.

pcmall.com

free lifetime technical support • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Many folks are familiar with **PC Mall's** thick, colorful catalog, and the online version is just as dense. PC Mall has a vast selection of computers, hardware, and software.

pcprogress.com

smooth navigation

If you're in the market for components and peripherals, check out **PC Progress.** The site specializes in cost-effective memory. You'll find a large selection, including notebook, iMac, and printer RAM.

pcstop.com

This purveyor of hardware and software offers 50,000 computer-related products from 1,300 manufacturers. **PCstop.com** offers a wealth of details about each product, including technical-support and warranty information.

pcwonders.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering
no telephone orders

At **pcWonders.com,** you'll find more than 120,000 hardware and software products. Additional categories include car audio, home electronics, and bargain blowouts.

pczone.com

printable rebate coupons • smooth navigation • easy ordering

PC Zone boasts an impressive product selection of all things PC-related, including desktops, notebooks, printers, monitors, storage devices, CPU upgrades, and network equipment—not to mention PDAs, digital cameras, and MP3 players. You'll also find links to a clearance area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Electronics Zone.**

SITE REVIEWS

provantage.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Provantage offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers. The selection includes software, hardware, books, and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor the products' prices and availability.

www.qualityclick.com

easy ordering • good return policy

The **Quality Click** Web store covers all the basics for PC users, including hardware, networking supplies, accessories, and software. Technical support is available through a toll-free phone number, fax, or e-mail.

shopper.cnet.com

smooth navigation

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The site tracks the prices of more than 200,000 products in 100 stores. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

shoppingplanet.com

smooth navigation

Do-it-yourselfers will appreciate **Shopping Planet's** inventory of barebones systems, add-on cards, and kits. An arm of the site that specializes in software and hardware for the Linux operating system is available at ***shoppingplanet.com/cm/linux.asp.***

www.sparco.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Sparco.com's catalog of more than 130,000 products makes it simple to shop for computer equipment. Looking for that something extra? Check out the list of products that come bundled with "free stuff."

www.spidergear.com

Spider Gear offers new and refurbished computers, cameras, home audio and video products, car audio items, and appliances. A $10 optional membership entitles you to reduced prices, an annual rebate, and more.

www.ssdonline.com

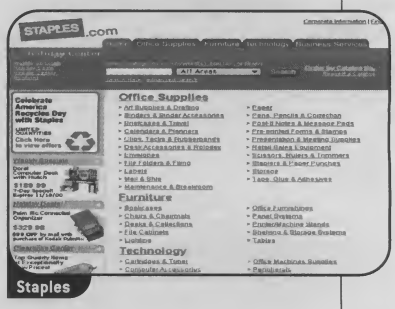
smooth navigation

At **State Street Direct's** Web store, shoppers will discover a huge selection of consumer electronics, in addition to computers and imaging products. Digital photographers will find many items of interest.

staples.com

liberal price-matching policy • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Even if a **Staples** store is just down the block, you might prefer this elegant Web site when shopping for computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized lists to avoid filling out a new form every time.



2for1inkjet.com

free shipping on orders of six or more items, or at least $200 • smooth navigation • good return policy

If your printer is putting you in the poorhouse, pay a visit to **2 For 1 Inkjet,** where you'll find two-for-one supplies for every brand of inkjet and laser printer, copier, and fax machine.

3re.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Specializing in used computers and rebuilt electronic equipment, **3Re.com** takes open-box returns from original equipment manufacturers, and repairs and repackages the machines. Offerings include desktops, notebooks, printers, monitors, network equipment, and software.

SITE REVIEWS

tccomputers.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

In business since 1988, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and name-brand peripherals. The company's specialty is motherboards: It tests each one prior to shipping and bundles a step-by-step installation video.

tcwo.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet Center offers "wholesale computer parts to the public." The selection is small—you may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives—but the prices are fantastic. Browse the selection or print out a complete price sheet for easy reference.

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet

techstore.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

TechStore offers hardware in dozens of categories, ranging from CPU upgrades to storage devices. The site also offers a wide range of software—everything from Microsoft applications to children's titles.

thortek.com

smooth navigation

An array of computer accessories awaits **ThorTek** shoppers, including hard drives, notebook upgrades, peripherals, and software.

tigerdirect.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

TigerDirect's site offers custom-built computers, tested and shipped within 48 hours. Shoppers in the mood for an adventure can order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit.

truedataonline.com

smooth navigation

True Data Technology's selection spans desktops, laptops, and palmtops, with an exceptional catalog of motherboards, hard drives, and other upgrade accessories. The site also features communication essentials for businesses, including DSL equipment and telephony products.

www.usbstuff.com

Looking for gadgets to plug into your new Universal Serial Bus-equipped computer? **USB Stuff** has it all, including digital cameras, CD-RW drives, printers, modems, hubs, input devices, cables, and adapters. A sister site at ***www.firewirestuff.com*** stocks IEEE 1394/FireWire-compatible hardware.

usedcomputer.com

index of nonprofit organizations accepting computer donations

Used Computer Mall is a marketplace for used computer equipment. Shoppers can list hardware to sell or look for items to buy using the free classified ads. The site can also help you appraise equipment.

warehouse.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The five "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware and software, Mac products, networking components, and supplies. The site provides corporate, educational, and government accounts. Business leases are available.

PC DIRECT VENDORS

axissys.com

The **Axis Systems** Web store offers a best-price guarantee on its preconfigured notebooks, servers, desktops, and workstations.

buyabs.com

systems available with Linux preinstalled • smooth navigation • good return policy

Offering exceptional customer support on quality desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS.** Shoppers can custom-configure a wide variety of PCs.

buy-atlas.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

The **Atlas Micro** site sells a variety of preconfigured desktop PCs. Buyers can select from computers built around Pentium III, Celeron, and AMD processors.

compaq.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The three arms of **Compaq's** site offer computers for everyone. See Consumer Direct ***(athome.compaq.com)*** for home and home-office systems, DirectPlus ***(www.directplus.compaq.com)*** for business PCs and servers, or the Compaq Factory Outlet Superstore ***(compaqfactoryoutlet.com)***.

cyberpowerinc.com

downloadable drivers • smooth navigation • good return policy

From the DVD Dream to the Lightning Professional, the computers at **CyberPower** have names as good as their warranties—three years, with a 30-day money-back guarantee.

dell.com

online technical support customized for your particular system • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Carrying the online banner for one of the largest names in direct PC sales, **Dell Computer Corp.** specializes in built-to-order desktop and notebook PCs. The site offers detailed specs, an online tour of each product, and customization options.

www.fosa.com

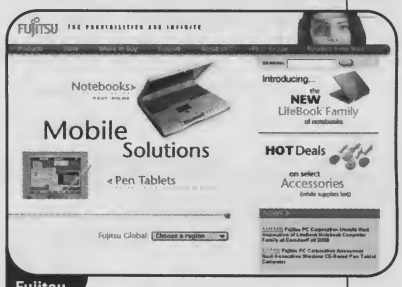
good return policy

Fosa's built-to-order notebook computers include a 15-day money-back guarantee with no restocking fee and lifetime technical support.

www.fujitsu-pc.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Purchase **Fujitsu** notebook computers from the source. This Web site offers personal, business, and multimedia notebook computers, with several warranty options on each. Check the Refurbished Outlet for deals.



Fujitsu

gateway.com

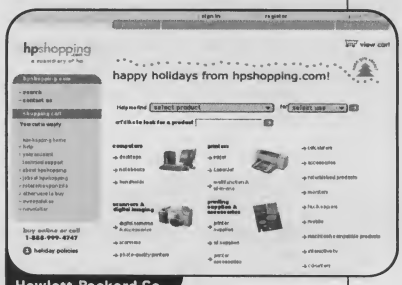
smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

One of the biggest names in online computer sales, **Gateway** offers an octopus-like site that sells custom-built desktops and portables. The company delivers them on time 98 percent of the time, according to e-commerce watchdog BizRate.com.

hpshopping.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

At this site, **Hewlett-Packard Co.** sells its lines of desktop and notebook computers, handhelds, PDAs, digital cameras, and printers. Business leases are also available.



Hewlett-Packard Co.

ibm.com/shop

Linux available on laptop models • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

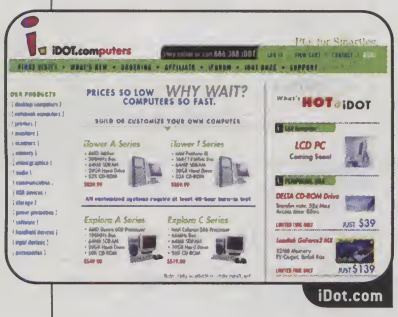
ShopIBM sells business and home computers, notebooks, servers, and thin clients. The site also offers the networking equipment to hook them all together, as well as peripherals and software. The build-to-order option allows buyers to customize a new desktop PC.

SITE REVIEWS

idot.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

From low-cost budget models to powerful monster machines, **iDot.com** offers customized desktop and notebook computers. The iForum area includes tech articles and Q&A lists of interest to PC shoppers.



kaypro.com

smooth navigation

Kaypro's first computer, released in the early '80s, used a Z-80 processor and ran the long-forgotten CP/M operating system. Today, the company's Web site sells decidedly more modern desktop computers, allowing shoppers to custom-configure Pentium III systems.

microexpress.net

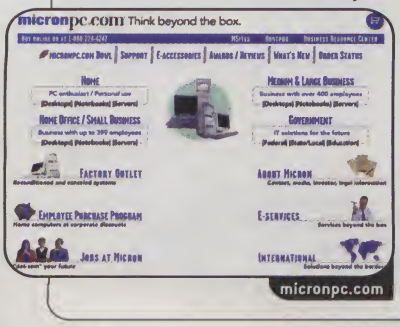
smooth navigation • good return policy

Micro Express offers custom-configured desktop and notebook computers featuring AMD and Intel processors. Each system includes a 30-day guarantee and a two- or four-year warranty.

micronpc.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **micronpc.com** has a Web sales site broken into clear areas to suit many types of customers, including home-office users, large businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside the United States.



nutrend.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Custom-configure a home or business PC at **NuTrend.** The company offers a wide selection of desktop machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors. Each system comes with a three-year warranty.

sagernotebook.com

leasing options available • smooth navigation • good return policy

Specializing in portable computers, **Sager** offers a variety of notebook-computing options, from budget machines to speedy multimedia units. The one-year warranty includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee.

shopprostar.com

downloadable drivers • smooth navigation • good return policy

Each computer in **ProStar's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy-repair promise, and free tech support.

store.apple.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Apple's easy-to-use online store allows buyers to custom-configure the company's Power Mac G4, PowerBook, iMac, and iBook computers. A wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories is also available.

tiny.com

smooth navigation

Leading British PC maker **Tiny Computers** has joined the U.S. market. The company's line of prebuilt PCs ranges from beginner to professional models.

unitedmicro.com

United Micro sells custom-configured desktop and server computers with Intel and AMD processors. The site also offers a large selection of motherboards for PC builders.

vaio.sonystyle.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

VAIO Direct sells Sony's line of desktops, notebooks, digital cameras, displays, and storage devices. The Xtras Direct arm offers add-ons for PCs, digital cameras, and other equipment.

www.winbook.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Focusing exclusively on notebook computers, **WinBook** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support.

windrover.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

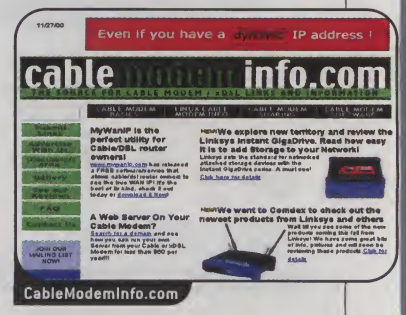
Windrover offers a 30-day return policy and three-year warranty on all of its prebuilt and custom-configured laptops.

PC RESOURCES

cablemodeminfo.com

helps you find a cable-ready ISP

Internet addicts considering upgrading to a cable modem or DSL connection—as well as users who have already made the jump—will find a cornucopia of information at **CableModemInfo.com.** You'll find reviews of cable-modem and DSL hardware, plus tips on sharing a modem between PCs.



www.consumersearch.com

smooth navigation

ConsumerSearch collects abstracts of all sorts of products, including computers, appliances, sports equipment, and automobiles. Each abstract includes a citation (for magazine articles) or a link (for online reviews).

dailyedeals.com

smooth navigation

Before you place an order at your favorite site, open a window to **DailyeDeals.** Its coupon pages offer codes that will instantly shave $5 to $40 off the bottom line at major online retailers. The First Time area links to substantial discounts for first-time customers.

dcresource.com

message board • links to digital-camera stores

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 175

an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers will enjoy the FAQ page, buyer's guide, and reviews.

Digital Camera Resource Page

dealtime.com

DealTime Mobile service lets you compare prices from a cell phone or Palm device • smooth navigation

DealTime is an independent comparison-shopping service that helps you decide where to buy online. The site aggregates prices from hundreds of merchants, auctions, and classified sites.

www.epubliceye.com

customer-satisfaction database • smooth navigation

Find Internet businesses that deliver the best service—and avoid the ones that don't—with **ePublicEye.com,** a customer-service rating site. The site uses secret shoppers who patronize Internet businesses, conducting audits and rating the service of each business.

expertcity.com

smooth navigation

Expertcity.com promises live, 24-hour computer assistance from real human beings. When you pose a question, experts across the Internet bid for your business. Read their profiles, compare prices, then choose the expert you like.

56k.com

downloads of the latest modem firmware • smooth navigation

Don't buy a new modem until you've visited **56K Modem Central.** Start with the primer on 56Kbps modems, learn the difference between technologies, then use the price shopper to find a model at the best price.

www.ftc.gov

SITE REVIEWS

smooth navigation

The **Federal Trade Commission's** Web site is packed with useful information for consumers. The content covers the spectrum of consumer fraud and how to avoid it—online and offline. Articles address online auctions and protecting yourself when shopping on the Net.

gomez.com

Site of the Month winner. See page 165.

motherboards.org

smooth navigation

Motherboard HomeWorld offers motherboard news, reviews, specifications, and tips. Its comprehensive database of 1,100 boards includes driver information, technical information, and overclocking details.

nextag.com

product reviews available • smooth navigation

NexTag is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.

pdastreet.com

smooth navigation

PDA Street, a resource for users of Palm, Windows CE, Psion, and Visor personal digital assistants, offers message boards, software downloads, news, and product reviews.

pricepda.com

smooth navigation

PricePDA.com is a price-comparison engine for buyers of personal digital assistants, accessories, and software. For each vendor, the site includes pricing and stock status, plus a list of states in which the vendor charges sales tax.

rammatters.com

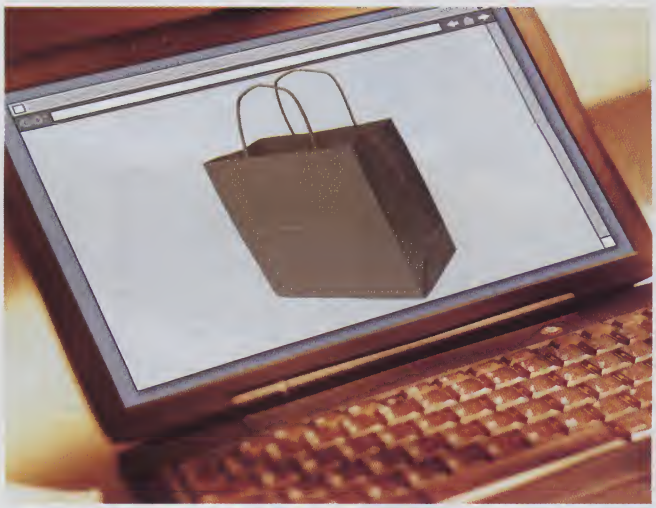
Flash 4 plug-in required for maximum effects

RAM Matters humorously explains how adding memory to your computer will make you more productive, and, so the site claims, better-looking. You'll get help in determining the type of memory your computer requires, plus installation tips.

www.scambusters.com

information on viruses—real and fake • smooth navigation

Internet ScamBusters is a site and a newsletter aiming to help Net users avoid getting cheated. Each newsletter focuses on a single type of scam, ranging from the merely annoying to the downright dangerous. Scams that target online shoppers are also covered.



usb.org

smooth navigation

Check the **USB Implementers Forum** for technical information about the Universal Serial Bus, as well as answers to frequently asked questions and information about devices that use it. You'll find information for end users as well as developers.

USB Implementers Forum

windrivers.com

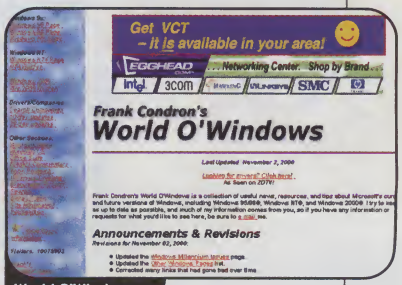
smooth navigation

WinDrivers.com is a comprehensive archive of drivers and DLL files for hard drives, sound cards, scanners, and other hardware. The site also provides links to antivirus updates and BIOS upgrades.

www.worldowindows.com

hundreds of downloadable drivers • smooth navigation

World O'Windows is a collection of useful news, resources, and tips about current and future versions of Microsoft Windows. Information and user tips abound. The site can be invaluable if you're considering upgrading or if your recent upgrade is causing problems.



World O'Windows

SOFTWARE SITES

accountingshop.com

get credit for your old QuickBooks or Peachtree software when you

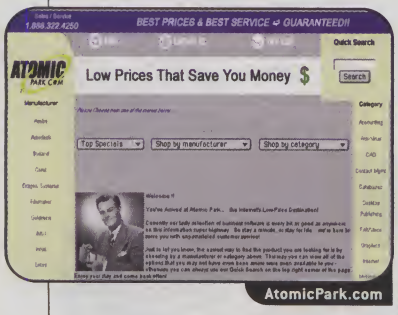
upgrade • smooth navigation

The **Accounting Shop** Web store focuses on accounting software. Shoppers can choose from an extensive catalog of high-end, midrange, and small-business packages. Easy-to-understand charts let you compare products by type, function, or price.

atomicpark.com

smooth navigation

AtomicPark.com specializes in business software, offering free shipping on all orders. Product categories include specialized areas such as voice-recognition software and fax applications.



beyond.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Beyond.com presents a smorgasbord of choices for PC, Mac, and PDA users. In addition to traditional boxed titles, the site sells downloadable software from major publishers. The site also offers a respectable selection of computer hardware, including digital cameras, PDAs, and storage devices. (CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company, is an investor in Beyond.com.)

buycheapsoftware.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

The name says it all: Here you can **BuyCheapSoftware.** This site offers a relatively small selection—about 300 titles—but it does sell popular programs from well-known publishers, including Adobe, Corel, Lotus, and Microsoft.

buyonet.com

site available in six languages • smooth navigation • good return policy

Buyonet specializes in downloadable commercial software. Hundreds of business applications, utilities, and games are available for download. For a nominal fee, shoppers can order a CD backup of purchased software.

chumbo.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

If you're looking for a one-stop shop for software, visit **Chumbo.com.** In addition to tons of Windows and Mac programs, the site features a Linux Store that sells applications for the popular alternative OS. You'll also find an array of DVD movies here.

cws.internet.com

free e-mail summary of software updates • smooth navigation

Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List is the ultimate one-stop download site for the latest and greatest in Internet software. Find and download Web-development tools, browsers, and chat clients. You'll find comprehensive file lists, ratings, and extensive reviews.

dealdealdeal.com

smooth navigation

Dealdealdeal.com offers office suites, utility software, graphics programs, operating systems, games, and edutainment software. Although the selection isn't massive, shoppers will find a nice mix of new software and older titles—handy, whether you're looking for Microsoft Office 2000 or Office 97.

download.cnet.com

smooth navigation

When you're looking for shareware or free software, **CNET Download.com** is a fine starting point. Well-written newsletters and down-to-earth reviews will help you find the perfect programs. The site links to tens of thousands of files of PC, Mac, Linux, and PDA software. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

SITE REVIEWS

ebworld.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

The online arm of the ubiquitous Electronics Boutique stores, **EBWorld.com** is a video-game player's paradise, offering 3,000 products. Its home page highlights new releases, coming-soon titles, and best-sellers.

freewarefiles.com

smooth navigation

Windows users who want great software without having to spend any money can start at **Freeware Files.** This Web site offers links to gratis business applications, screen savers, games, and many other types of software. It features quick links to the most popular giveaways.

jumbo.com

smooth navigation

Jumbo is the perfect name for this monstrous file archive. In addition to programs for sale, you'll find thousands of commercial-application demos, along with loads of shareware and free software.

mightyscholar.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

It can be hard to find educational software that's right for your children's ages and learning needs. **Mighty Scholar** sells handpicked educational software, categorized by age range and subject.

999central.com

buy seven programs, get one free • smooth navigation • good return policy

The **999central.com** site offers 500 programs, each for $9.99. Shoppers can find a wide variety of software here, although educational, entertainment, and lifestyle programs are the most common.

www.pdfstore.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **PDF Store** specializes in software for creating and working with Portable Document Format files. The site sells shareware and commercial software for immediate download. The selection includes PDF conversion, management, printing, and development software—a convenient, focused selection.

soft4u.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Soft4U.com specializes in software for businesses, resellers, schools, and government offices. The company offers same-day shipping on most software. Special prices are available for staff and students at academic institutions.

www.softwarebuyline.com

free shipping on orders over $50 • smooth navigation • good return policy

SoftwareBuyLine.com has a massive selection of software titles for Windows, Mac OS, Windows CE, and Palm. Prices here are usually among the best. You'll also get easy access to product rebate information.

www.tucows.com

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Bovine bliss: **Tucows** is an incredible archive of freeware and shareware. The category list and reviews make it easy to find the particular software you're seeking. ▼